

# News from Ed Markey

**United States Congress**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 2, 2002**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**CONTACT: Israel Klein/Colin Crowell**

**(202) 225-2836**

## **MARKEY RELEASED DIGITAL TELEVISION GAO REPORT**

### **GAO Recommends Additional Government Steps to Spur Transition**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – U.S. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Ranking Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet, today released a report by the General Accounting Office (GAO) on various issues impeding the transition to digital television (DTV).

“DTV still has incredible potential for being a driver of economic growth, innovation, and job creation,” Mr. Markey said, “but only if the government provides the leadership required to jump-start much-needed economic activity by taking concrete steps to dramatically accelerate the digital television transition.”

The GAO makes several recommendations for government action in its report to Mr. Markey. Specifically, the GAO recommends that the Federal Communications Commission should:

- 1) examine whether to set a ‘date certain’ for transferring must-carry rights from broadcasters analog signals to digital signals;
- 2) analyze whether to mandate that all television sets be digital ‘cable ready,’ and,
- 3) commence stepped up efforts to raise public awareness about the DTV transition and its implications for consumers.

“I believe that the GAO’s recommendations with respect to mandating cable tuners as well as the notion of a switch-over to digital from analog must-carry rights merit particular attention,” Mr. Markey said. “I will be crafting legislative proposals in the coming weeks that contain the policy suggestions advanced by the GAO, as well as other initiatives, for consideration by my Subcommittee colleagues. I look forward to working with House Commerce Committee Chairman Tauzin, Ranking Member Dingell, and other colleagues on issues affecting digital television in the next session of Congress.”

“In addition, of pressing concern given the current holiday shopping season, is the fact that the GAO found that too many consumers still are not aware of the DTV transition - a full 40% of consumers had not even heard of it.” (The GAO also found that sales staff at retail outlets were also woefully uninformed about key aspects of the DTV transition - 18 of 23 sales staff provided inaccurate information about at least one significant aspect regarding digital TV.)

“The potential combination of consumers who may be unaware of the DTV transition, interacting with retailers providing erroneous DTV information, is a consumer protection nightmare scenario,” Mr. Markey continued. “The FCC has a consumer protection responsibility in this area and should explore initiatives to address this concern. In addition, consumer electronics retailers must address deficiencies identified by the GAO and I urge the industry to take corrective action -- on an urgent basis.”

The GAO Report “Additional Federal Efforts Could Help Advance Digital Television Transition” will be available at [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov).